

Identity and lectotypification of *Berberis khasiana* Ahrendt

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Abstract

Berberis khasiana Ahrendt is found to be conspecific with *B. lycium* Royle and hence superfluous. A lectotype for the former is designated here.

Ahrendt (1943, 1961) and subsequently Uniyal and Rao (1993) treated *Berberis khasiana* Ahrendt as a distinct species closely allied to *B. lycium* Royle under section *Asiaticae*. These two taxa were distinguished based on stem and leaf character and usually keyed out as below:

1. Stem mostly terete; leaves 4-7 cm, mostly spinose *B. lycium*
1. Stem sulcate; leaves 1-2 cm, entire *B. khasiana*

B. khasiana is distributed in Meghalaya (Khasia Hills) and Nepal, whereas *B. lycium* is widely distributed from Jammu and Kashmir eastwards to Nepal including Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh in the Himalaya, and Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. During the course of a revisionary study of the genus *Berberis* L., the authors collected specimens from the field, and also examined numerous specimens available at BSD, DD, CAL, LWG under these two species and found that the distinguishing characters of the two species not only overlap but also vary from population to population and often on the same plant. Morphologically both the taxa resembled each other. The types of both the 'species' deposited at K and BM were critically examined and it was concluded that *B. khasiana* and *B. lycium* are conspecific and therefore the former is treated as a synonym of the latter.

Berberis lycium Royle, Trans. Linn. Soc. Lond. 17: 94. 1834; Hook. f. & Thomson in Fl. Brit. India 1: 110. 1872, *pro parte*; Hook. f., Bot. Mag. 115: t. 7075. 1889; Collett, Fl. Siml. 22. 1902; Chatterjee, Rec. Bot. Surv. India 16(2): 13. 1953; Parker, For. Fl. Punjab 14. 1958 (repr. ed). (*pro parte*); Ahrendt, J. Linn. Soc. Bot. 57:87. 1961; Jafri in Fl. W. Pakistan 87: 10. 1975; Uniyal & Rao in Fl. India 1: 372-373. 1993.

Type: Kashmir: Royle s.n. (K).

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Berberis khasiana Ahrendt, J. Bot. Lond. 80 (Suppl.) 100. 1943; et J. Linn. Soc. Bot. 57: 89. 1961; Uniyal & Rao in Fl. India 1: 372. 1993. LT: Assam: Khasia Hills, 1844.

As no holotype was designated by the founding author of *Berberis khasiana*, a lectotype is designated here based on the study of specimens available at BM and K.

Type: Assam, Khasia Hills, 1844, *Griffith s.n.* (Lecto-: BM; Isolecto-: K).

Acknowledgements

The authors are thankful to the Director, National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow for facilities and to the authorities of BM for loan of specimens.

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